

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 280733Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2920
INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT YO

SUBJ: TITO'S 83RD BIRTHDAY FETED

1. YUGOSLAVIA WENT THROUGH TRADITIONAL ROUND OF CELEBRATIONS FOR TITO'S 83RD BIRTHDAY AND YOUTH DAY BOTH OF WHICH FALL ON MAY 25. THE OUTPOURING OF ADULATION, AT LEAST EQUAL IN FERVOR TO THAT OF PREVIOUS YEARS CONTAINED AN UNMISTAKABLE NOTE OF NOSTALGIA.

2. TITO AND MADAME BROZ GAVE A BIRTHDAY LUNCH FOR HIS "CLOSEST ASSOCIATES": MEMBERS OF THE STATE PRESIDENCY PLUS KIRO GLIGOROV, DZEMAL DIBJEDIC, STANE DOLANC, NIKOLA LJUBICIC AND DRAGOSLAV MARKOVIC BY NAME, AND "OTHER (UNNAMED) IMPORTANT OFFICIALS OF FEDERATION, REPUBLICS AND PROVINCES." IN A TOAST PRAISING TITO'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS, BAKARIC ALSO NOTED ABSENCE FROM OCCASION OF VEJKO VLAHOVIC, WHO DIED IN MARCH. IN HIS REPLY TITO REMINISCED ABOUT HIS OLD COMRADES NOTING THAT "ONLY A FEW OF US REMAIN", AND MENTIONED PASSING OF VLAHOVIC. TITO AGAIN EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO REJECT ANY ATTEMPT TO DETRACT FROM YUGOSLAVIA'S WARTIME AND POST-WAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. HE THEN RECALLED THAT HE AND KARDELJ HAD BEEN TOGETHER IN MOSCOW IN EARLY DAYS AND HAD ALWAYS WORKED WITH THE YUGOSLAV PARTY IN MIND, NOT DOING THINGS SIMPLY TO PLEASE SOMEONE ABROAD. HE ALSO HAILED THE YOUNG GENERATION AS THE VANGUARD OF THE FUTURE.

3. THAT EVENING, FOLLOWING PRACTICE OF PREVIOUS YEARS, TITO

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ACCOMPLANIED BY HIS WIFE AND SAME CLOSE ASSOCIATES

WHO WERE AT LUNCH, WATCHED TRADITIONAL YOUTH DAY TATTOO FROM HIS BON IN BELGRADE'S JNA STADIUM. THE PROGRAM WAS LESS THAN HALF AS LONG AS LAST YEAR, HOWEVER, AND THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF PROTOCOL STATED FLATLY TO THE AMBASSADOR THAT IT HAD BEEN CURTAILED BECAUSE OF TITO'S HEALTH.

4. COMMENT: TITO'S HAIR APPEARED TO BE FRESHLY DYED. HIS FACE SEEMED PUFFIER THAN IN RECENT APPEARANCES, POSSIBLY SHOWING THE EFFECTS OF ILLNESS OR MEDICATION. NON-OFFICIAL YUGOSLAV FRIENDS OBSERVED TO ONE EMBASSY OFFICER THAT TITO DID NOT LOOK WELL TO THEM THE FORESHORTENED YOUTH DAY PROGRAM AND THE REMINISCENCES OVER LUNCH STRUCK A NOTE OF NOSTALGIA NOT PRESENT IN PREVIOUS YEARS, AND A NOTE WHICH WAS NOT DISPELLED BY TITO'S OBVIOUS ENJOYMENT OF THE EVENTS.

SILBERMAN

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